

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 7223

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CG US AO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU

REF: KINSHASA 7219

1. IN PRESENCE ONLY OF DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENCY
BISENGIMANA AND FONMIN UMBA DURING COURSE OF
PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY TODAY, AUGUST 21,
PRESIDENT BEGAN OUR PRIVATE CHAT BY INDICATING
HIS KNOWLEDGE OF MY WHITE HOUSE BACKGROUND AND OF
SECRETARY KISSINGER'S GENEROUS REMARKS TO UMBA
CONCERNING ME. HE THEN TALKED OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN
OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS HE
HAD ENJOYED WITH MY PREDECESSORS. AT BEGINNING
IT WAS A LITTLE TOO POETIC FOR MY TASTE BUT
BEING ON GOOD BEHAVIOR WHEN PRESIDENT SPOKE OF
"THE CLOUDLESS SKY OVER ZAIRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS,"
I RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO POINT TO FEW SMALL
CLOUDS I PERCEIVE.

2. TURNING MORE TO BUSINESS, HE SAID THAT HE
LOOKED TO THE UNITED STATES FOR COOPERATION,
PARTICULARLY IN FIELDS OF DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENTS,
AND FINANCING. I STARTED TO COMMENT ON THIS BUT
HE IMMEDIATELY INDICATED THAT THIS WAS NOT THE
TIME FOR A DISCUSSION ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE
REFERRED AGAIN TO UMBA'S RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON
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AND I ALLOWED AS HOW THE COMMISSAIRE AND I HAD
DISCUSSED THAT VISIT YESTERDAY. HE HESITATED

AND THEN SAID, "THE INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA" IS ZAIRE'S MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD, IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR US ALSO, AND THAT IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT INDEPENDENCE BE ACHIEVED IN AS PEACEFUL A FASHION AS POSSIBLE. HE AGREED. I BRIEFLY GAVE HIM MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH COMMISSAIRE UMBA. HE SAID WE UNDERSTOOD IT CORRECTLY AND THAT FOR HIM THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT WAS MORE AID FOR HOLDEN ROBERTO. I SAID WE WERE CAREFULLY EXAMINING THAT BUT THAT IT WAS PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT POINT OF ALL. AS OF NOW, I WAS AUTHORIZED TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH AND TO LISTEN TO ROBERTO. I STRESSED THAT I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO BOTH ROBERTO'S REPUTATION AS AN INDEPENDENT AFRICAN LEADER AND TO USEFUL CONDUCT OF A HIGHER LEVEL DISCUSSION THAT THIS BE DONE MOST DISCREETLY. HE AGREED, WELCOMED THE SECRETARY'S RESPONSE, AND INDICATED THAT UMBA, WHO GRINNED HAPPILY, WOULD MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS. HEN THEN PRESSED GENTLY AGAIN ON MORE TANGIBLE ASSISTANCE, WONDERING WHY IT WAS SO DIFFICULT FOR US. I INDICATED THAT THE "SO-CALLED AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" REALLY HESITATED TO GET INVOLVED IN INTERNAL AFRICAN AFFAIRS. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES LAUGHED AND THERE THE SUBJECT WAS LEFT.

3. I INDICATED THAT I WAS ALWAYS AT HIS DISPOSAL AND SUGGESTED THAT I WOULD APPRECIATE AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY FOR A DEEPER DISCUSSION. HE RESPONDED, "OF COURSE," BUT ONLY TIME WILL TELL.

4. MOBUTU STRUCK ME AS VERY SURE OF HIMSELF, IN COMPLETE COMMAND OF ENTIRE CEREMONY, IN WHICH HE TOOK JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE, CHARMINGLY CORDIAL, BUT ALSO A BIT ABOVE MUNDANE MATTERS AS NO DOUBT BEFITS A CHIEF OF STATE. HINTON

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